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MEMORIAL.

A Testimony of Haddonfield Monthly Meeting, N. J., concerning CHARLES RHOADS.

"The path of the just is as a shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

To show forth the praises of Him who hath called men out of darkness into His marvelous light, and to illustrate the way and means by which they may become possessors of an heavenly inheritance, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the object of our Testimony to the Christian career of our late beloved friend Charles Rhoads.

He was born First Month 21st, 1828, in Marple Township, Delaware County, Pa., and was the son of Joseph and Hannah Rhoads.

Under the careful training of these, his deeply concerned parents, he was reared amid the refining influences of a truly Christian home, where piety and intelligence of a high order were beautifully combined; being sur-

rounded by many conditions favorable to a just appreciation of the value of the Christian religion, as exemplified in the lives of his godly parents, whose chief aim was to do the will of their Father in heaven, and to manifest the rule of Christ's life, in their daily practice.

After attending the Friend's school at Springfield, Pa., he had the benefit of the guarded education afforded by Westtown Boarding School. And yet, valuable as were these influences, they at times became overbalanced by the propensity of human nature to gratify its carnal desires, by indulgences in some directions, from which his better understanding of obedience to the rule of holiness would have dissuaded him.

The Divine Spirit visited his soul in very early life. At five years of age, and again at six, his feelings were much overcome at times of religious exercises in the family. An interesting instance of yielding to a sense of duty occurred about his eleventh year, when having quarreled with his twin brother, on their going to rest for the night, penitence was followed by the restoration of love, which was never after seriously interrupted. Late in life he recurred to these early visitations of Divine

love, softening his heart, giving him a sense of the nearness and loving notice of his Saviour, and leading to the belief that, though a straying, he was not a lost sheep. In his early public ministrations he has been heard to refer to his youthful failures, in the words of David, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions."

As he grew to manhood the want of a strong physical constitution was compensated for by mental energy which carried him successfully through much labor, both in his private business, and in the cause of truth and righteousness.

About his twentieth year he engaged in business in Philadelphia, where coming into close relations with acquaintances who had not the strong conscientious convictions which had been felt by himself, he was led into some indulgences of fashionable life which delayed his spiritual progress. Having a home with his uncle Charles Evans, assisted to keep him in touch with those whose lives were regulated by Christian faithfulness, and whose company counteracted in measure, worldly tendencies.

In his twenty-eighth year he married Anna H. Nicholson, of Haddonfield, which happy

union continued for eight years. During this period he was a member of the Monthly Meeting of Friends of Philadelphia for the Southern District.

In 1859 Charles Rhoads recorded a Divine visitation to his soul, after a long period of temptation to doubt and gloomy incertitude regarding the truth of the Christian religion. He says, "With an ardent desire to possess true faith in the Christian scheme of salvation, and constant aspirations after some tangible and indisputable evidence of its consistency with human reason, * * * I have often secretly been enabled to put up strong aspirations to the Throne of grace, that the great Father of light would be pleased to admit one ray of His illuminating influence into my benighted soul. No answer however, seemed to be vouchsafed to these petitions, but I have been struck with those Scripture passages which enjoin—long continued and repeated prayer."

"Sitting in Friends' meeting in Orange Street with my mind much engaged in these inward aspirations to God, I was favored to feel a tendering influence overspread my soul, and its character was such that I could not doubt my blessed Saviour had in great mercy,

visited me with the presence of his Holy Spirit; so that I could say, 'Surely my Redeemer liveth, and will yet give me the victory over the cruel adversary.' I could not but be assured after all my distressing doubts, that there was a real supernatural influence granted me, in great condescension, to rebuke my tempter and enemy. My dear aunt Elizabeth Evans prayed as it were, especially for me, adapting her description of a peculiar state so remarkably to mine as to completely dissolve me in tears. I cannot describe the relief of mind this visitation has afforded me, and I hope it is the dawning of a new day in my life."

Although thus helped over a most difficult point in his Christian course, he still found it necessary to take the shield of faith, and have frequent recourse to supplication for the help of Him who has trodden the winepress alone, and is ready to succor all who are tempted.

That Charles Rhoads never yielded to unbelief, or to the rejection of the faith of Friends, is proven by remarks penned in his sixtieth year. He writes, "I believe that the Society of Friends as an organization of Christian people, has been a great blessing to thousands who have been brought within its influence.

* * * I feel it to be the highest privilege of my life to have had my birth and education in a God-fearing family, and among pious people of our Society. The freedom from many hurtful associations that boys and young men are subject to, where their parents are careless of religious duties, has been a great help to me in my youth. The doctrines and principles maintained by Friends since their rise, and in which I was educated, became early in life, those of my conviction and deliberate judgment."

Anna N. Rhoads died in 1864, and in 1867 Charles Rhoads' eldest daughter Mary was suddenly called away. These events deeply grieved his sensitive and loving heart. That they were among the things which worked together for his good, he shows by the following extract: "Surely he who has seen meet to recall from me, my most precious jewel after her sainted mother, finds it needful again to query 'Lovest thou me more than these?'"

His character as a business man, was marked by sterling integrity, coupled with intelligence and experience, excelling many of his profession; which caused him to be sought after by

friends and neighbors for advice, to whose applications he ever gave a ready response.

Those who were in trouble found in him a truly sympathizing friend.—The following entry in his Journal was made in 1866: "It has long been a subject of great concern with me in carrying on my business, lest I should lose that delicate sense of responsibility to the Most High for all my time and powers, through the engrossing character of my avocations. My religious obligations are clearly paramount to all others, and my mind has often been greatly straitened to arrive at a just discrimination of my duty in all respects. Truly Oh! Father, nought but thy wisdom can direct; no less a power than thine can keep me from temptation and failure to duty, through over-anxiety about the care and support of my family."

In 1868 he makes this record. "Since my last memorandum, my spiritual experience has been of a varied hue; but I have felt that I might safely record, perhaps, a hope I have had to day, that some progress is experienced from time to time, through Divine mercy, in that holy way which leads to the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Yet sorely have I often to feel that I take many halting steps through want of entire dedication to, and humble faith in Christ."

Fifth Month 13th, 1866. After alluding to refreshing meetings enjoyed in silence, and contrasting them with a period when a wandering mind and worldly thoughts were attended by great barrenness of spirit, he makes these remarks, "If those who absent themselves from our weekly assemblies for want of interest to bring them (there) could but know the peace and joy which will attend all, as I believe, who wrestle when there for the water of life, surely we should not have to mourn over so many almost deserted meetings as we now do."

Charles Rhoads had received a call to the ministry, and had engaged in it in 1866. His natural abilities, which were above the average, were being sanctified for the Master's use, and that humility which marked his character was being deepened as the sense of his Saviour's loving favor was heightened in his soul. His memoranda however, refer repeatedly to the need he felt of spiritual food from Christ; and the cleansing of his atoning blood; leading him to adopt the language of

David, "Create in me a clean heart, Oh, God; and renew a right spirit within me."

He quotes the words of the Psalmist, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord." And continues, "I trust that this sense of gratitude was inspired by the good Spirit of our Saviour who alone can beget a true apprehension of Divine favor."

Referring to his success in business, for several years previous, he makes this note, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits? Grant, Oh! Heavenly Father, that these blessings may not prove a snare to my soul, and rob Thee of that devotion of heart, soul, and time, which is thy due."

In the Third Month of 1870 he was united in marriage to Beulah S. Morris, of Germantown, in whom he found a wife who could join him in his spiritual exercises and aid him in efforts for the relief and elevation of many less favorably circumstanced. Among these were the colored race, towards whom an active charity was extended, and personal visits were made to their homes, schools and religious meetings

Charles Rhoads had continued to exercise his gift in the ministry as renewed calls to

service were from time to time extended; and in the Ninth Month of 1872, the Elders of his Monthly Meeting decided to propose official recognition of his gift.

In connection with this, he makes these remarks: "It is now nearly seven years since I first felt an obligation laid upon me to speak in the way of public ministry. During the intervening period of probation my spirit at times has almost fainted by the way; and I have been ready to exclaim with the prophet, 'Oh Lord God, behold I am a child, I cannot speak, yet I feel bound to acknowledge the unbounded goodness of Israel's Shepherd, that He has renewed his covenant with so poor and halting a servant, from time to time, and has not utterly taken His word out of my mouth."

"It is no small relief to my faltering spirit, that those Friends who are constituted the judges of such affairs by our church discipline, are so satisfied with the genuineness of my commission to the high and holy calling of a minister of the Gospel of Christ."

"And now my hope is in Him alone, who is able to guide and keep his servants. And my prayer is unto the God of my life, that I may be endued with the armor of faith and

humility, and not seek great things for myself."

He elsewhere had written the following: "My views of the qualification of those who speak in the Lord's name have been confirmed; that they must proceed directly from Him who has the key of David: 'who shuts and no man opens, and who openeth and no man can shut;' and a clearer light seems to have been cast upon my path in this service; which I trust emanates from the Sun of righteousness himself."

In 1872 he concluded to break off from the active pursuit of business, and remarks in regard to it, "It is a relief of mind to think of being more free from the close attention which seems necessary to carry on a successful one in a large city; and it is my earnest desire and prayer that being so favored by the great Author of all our mercies, I may more assiduously devote the remainder of my time to his service."

That his spiritual progress should be unimpeded, he was often engaged in prayer, and he has left numerous expressions of his longings in this respect. The following relates to this close introspection. "It is not sufficient

that we set our faces Zion-ward and make some progress in the heavenly path. We must know the entire government of our hearts to be upon His shoulders, and that His heavenly kingdom has been set up there. In this state we shall bring forth fruit unto holiness, and honor the great Husbandman."

1876. In looking back to the affliction brought to him by the death of a beloved wife and two children, he observes, "I think I can set my seal to the scripture truth that 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more are they to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward.' * * * How regardful of my true, my highest interests has my compassionate Redeemer proved himself to be, in thus loosening the bonds which had tied me too closely to temporal enjoyments."

1877—First Month 21st. "This day I enter my fiftieth year. Is there any growth in the Truth? This I feel to be a pertinent inquiry for me as age advances. The apostle exhorts to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And of some he could say,

'Your faith groweth exceedingly.' I need more crucifixion of self. Not my will but thine, Oh, Lord, be done."

Some of his spiritual exercises at this time may have been a preparation for entering on extensive service in a distant field.

Third Month 18th, he remarks: "The concern of my mind relative to religious service distant from home continuing to press upon me, with fervent petitions to know the Divine will respecting it, I believe I have been favored in His compassion to so unworthy a servant, to have the clear pointings of the Shepherd's finger, that it is laid upon me to visit Friends in Kansas in their meetings, and also to attend the meetings held at some of the Agencies in the Indian Territory; and perhaps to appoint some meetings among those not professing with Friends, in those parts."

The concern received the approval of his Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. The unsettled state of our Society in those parts caused painful solicitude in the prospect of this visit; and his prayer was put up in the language of Moses; "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."

After the completion of this visit, he ex-

pressed his feelings in this fitting language, "Bless the Lord, oh, my soul; all that is within me, bless his Holy name." In the journey, which occupied about nine weeks, he had the congenial company of our late friend John Sharpless. All the service indicated above was accomplished, and its value is still remembered by Friends in Kansas Yearly Meeting. A general visit to Friends of North Carolina was performed in 1886, in company with his brother Joseph Rhoads.

Before and after this period he was frequently engaged in ministerial labors within the limits of our Yearly Meeting, either from his personally being drawn to it, or in connection with committees. As a member of the Westtown committee his labors in the ministry are believed to have been blessed.

1877. After alluding to his appointment by the Meeting for Sufferings to the Book Committee, and making observations on the distribution of Friends' writings, he says: "Having read much (religious) literature, and seen a good deal of professing Christians of most denominations, I am now well satisfied that the doctrines and practices of the ancient Friends are those of Christ and his apostles."

In 1878 he writes, "Oh, how weighty does the office of a minister of Christ often feel to me. May every unhallowed thought be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. May I be filled with Divine love towards all for whom Christ died; considering my own former sins, now blotted out, may I not reverently trust, thro' his pardoning mercy, upon faith and repentance."

First Month 21st. Recounting many mercies and blessings, he exclaims "The hope and assurance of a rich and free redemption from the thraldom of evil, through the atoning blood of Christ is the climax of them all."

Again, "The veil seems lifted, and the way into the Holiest of all opened by Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life."

In the course of the next year he suffered much from weak health and acute illness; during which time, much searching of heart was known, and his prayers were earnest for entire purity of heart, and for communion with his Lord.

His interest in the cause of morality had led him to take an active part with others in the suppression of vicious amusements in his

county, which was successful in abolishing the horse racing at Gloucester.

The evils of intemperance claimed his earnest efforts for the prohibition of the liquor traffic. He was for years a member of the New Jersey State Temperance Alliance, in the meetings of which he used the opportunity to explain the religious views of Friends. Respecting taking a public part in this cause he says, "I feel a caution not to compromise our testimonies in connection with it. I am satisfied there is no need to throw off the Friend, or our peculiar testimonies in moving amongst others, and that there is a Power which will preserve and carry safely through times of trial."

1880. In a family meeting he said, "All my life's experience tends to increase my estimate of that religion which restrains the indulgence of the vain mind, in the friendships and allurements of a worldly spirit."

Calmness and dignity, tempered by cheerfulness and affability, marked his intercourse with others. Firm in his convictions, and fearless in expressing them, yet with tenderness, he found a place in the hearts of those with whom he came in contact. His rever-

ential attitude in times of worship was impressive. His ministry was clear, sound and edifying, skilfully dividing the word of Truth. In vocal supplication his utterance was often in much brokenness and self distrust.

Richly endowed with gifts natural and Divine, he was a faithful steward of his Lord's goods. Using the talents bestowed, their gain was manifold to the praise of the Giver. Advancing years and impaired health formed no excuse for neglect of the Master's work. In 1887 he wrote: "Pay thy vows unto the Most High. A sense of such an obligation is present with me. Oh, that it may be attended with his grace and strength to fulfil it. We may be sensible of our duty, but not devoted enough, not unselfish enough to carry it out. To love Him and adore in Spirit and in Truth, we require to be transformed by the renewings of the mind, an infusion of Christ's spirit. And shall we not have this? Yes, He has said his Father will give the Holy Spirit to them who ask Him for it."

The uncertainty of prolonged life was evidently often present in his thoughts. The following review of his life may be appropriate: "I have been much favored with ma-

terial and social surroundings and sources of enjoyment in my life; but now as I near three score and five years of age, though I humbly trust, grateful to my Creator for all his bounties to me and mine, there is nothing on which the spirit can rest with solid satisfaction and hope, but the merciful love of God to man through the gift of his dear Son, as our sacrifice and atonement on the cross; and of his Holy Spirit as our baptizer and sanctifier from the pollution of sin, through faith and repentance toward Him. This blessed hope is an anchor to the soul, when the pleasures of sense and intellect decay and pall on the diminished physical powers; and I bless and praise my Heavenly Father that his unmerited grace to me, a poor unworthy sinner, has been abundant in faith and love That He has borne with me in my wayward youth, calling me out of darkness into his marvellous Light, and from the power of Satan to yield myself up to Him for the washing of regeneration; and now in my advanced years not casting me off for my weakness and infirmities; but reviving a right spirit within me, and giving me at times the joys of his salvation, and the

living bread which nourishes the soul to everlasting life"

The last entry in his journal is dated Twelfth Month 9th, 1902. The following is an extract: "I have been quite sick and at times seriously so, but am now able to be about the house, and am regaining my normal vigor gradually. It has been a season of deep proving as to my foundation on the only Rock, which will stand in the day of account. There seemed at one time but a narrow step between me and death; and fervent have been my petitions that the work of sanctification might be completed before the day of probation is ended, and that an entrance might be granted me, an unworthy servant, through the atoning blood of Jesus, and the washing of regeneration by his Holy Spirit, into the mansions of rest, when the spirit should vacate the earthly tenement. Truly I can say with the Psalmist, "How excellent is thy loving kindness, oh God; therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."

"Some assurance was felt in these times of trial, that He would receive me for his mercies' sake."

On his seventy-fifth birthday a fresh accession of disease rapidly reduced his strength, and his life ended on the twenty-fifth of First Month, 1903, with the voice of praise to Him who had redeemed him to Himself.

WM. C. COWPERTHWAITE,
SARAH NICHOLSON. } *Clerks.*

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